

Juggling with a lifetime dream

Bart Hoving loves to juggle and crowds at Expo love watching him, Yu Ran reports.

During the last two months, a group of young men from the Berlin School for Acrobatic Arts have displayed their skills to queuing visitors at the Germany Pavilion. Towering over the other performers, Bart Hoving, the tallest and only non-German performer, has turned his hobby of juggling into a long-term goal of becoming a circus performer.

"I started following my sister performing basic juggling tricks when I was eight years old, and then I got addicted to juggling," said Hoving, an 18-year-old from Zwolle in the Netherlands.

Hoving continued to practice juggling but also knew he wanted to perform other tricks. His parents gave him a unicycle and began looking for a circus club for more intense training.

"My parents found a trainer at a local circus club for me to have weekly training sessions, which enabled me to learn all kinds of tricks and expand my potential and possibilities," said Hoving.

Hoving also learned and created his own tricks by watching video clips of other jugglers. He participated in juggling festivals and was the champion in every competition he competed in between 2007 and 2009.

Hoving moved from the Netherlands to Berlin to pursue his dream of becoming a professional performer. After graduating high school, he decided to delay further academic studies to focus on performing

at the Berlin School for Acrobatic Arts, the only publicly funded educational establishment in Germany where young people can train at to become circus artists while continuing their studies.

"Juggling became my specialization," he said.

During the past two months, students of the Berlin School for Acrobatic Arts have been performing near the German Pavilion. The 11 students have surprised and enthralled visitors with their handstands, trapeze acts and juggling skills, despite the heat and humidity.

"We've worn robot costumes and make-up while performing in front of tourists for two hours every day in the afternoon," said Hoving.

The young performers enjoy the open and friendly attitude of Expo visitors, who seemed very interested in their performances and in the Germany Pavilion.

"I was so surprised and delighted to find out that Chinese people were that easily impressed. They were extremely excited and taking photos of me," Hoving said, adding that he enjoyed being admired by the crowds.

One challenge for the performers was incorporating the audiences in their stunts and shows.

"We didn't have a regular routine or schedule for our performance. I normally would walk around to play with tourists by taking someone's hat and juggling it," he said.

Next year, Hoving will graduate from the Berlin School for Acrobatic Arts and plans to continue his juggling career at the Académie Fratellini, a world-class school of circus arts in Paris.

"I believe that it will never be too late to get back to academic studies. I'm still young and can learn juggling, which is physically demanding and has its age restrictions," he said.



Bart Hoving, a member of the Berlin School for Acrobatic Arts, entertains Expo visitors waiting to enter the Germany Pavilion.



Hoving gets some air time.

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